



# OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

**"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" Hebrews 10:24**

*JULY 29, 2007*

## MAKE A PATH

Hope had given way to doubt.

The beads of sweat cascaded down his back under his already drenched shirt and the muscles in his hand wouldn't relinquish the claw-like shape they formed around the machete. The jungle seemed to grow thicker and the shafts of light that were so bright at the start of the journey now scarcely pierced through the foliage.

His memory flickered back long before this odyssey ever began. He hadn't even realized that he was headed in the wrong direction until that old man had pointed it out. The silver haired gent unfolded his map and told him of a place where all a person's expectations could be realized. He went on to declare that everything beyond imagination was available there and it didn't

cost a dime. The only catch, if you want to call it that, was that a journey needed to be made. So the old man took him into his storeroom and outfitted him with everything necessary for the trip.

The years spent in this ruthless vegetation had definitely taken their toll, the deep physical scars paled in comparison to the mental anguish that chided him with each plodding step. The inner voices echoed in his skull: "I want to believe", "I investigated this carefully", and "I'm not a quitter" but the ominous utterances would than worm their way into his brain: "the old man lied to you", "you're such a fool", "give up and turn back."

He finally relented to those nagging doubts and with a heavy sigh, he laid his blade down and started to head back to the main road. As he turned he nearly tripped on the unbeknownst small boy that was right on his heels. He had been so preoccupied with the slashing of brush and wiping the sweat from his eyes that he hadn't noticed the little guy following him. "How did you get through the tangle of vines and leaves" he asked the lad? "Easy", was the youthful answer, "I just followed the path you had made." With that the man found renewed strength for the expedition and mounted the boy on his shoulders and commenced towards the promised locale sharing the directions of the map with his son.

### WHAT ABOUT US?

Are we still focused on the goal of glory with God in heaven as we chop away at the weeds of the world that try to strangle out our spirit or are the devil's schemes taking root?

*Matthew 13:25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.*

*Mark 4:7 "And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*

Maybe some of those same harassing doubts find their way into our consciousness and we feel like chucking it all because it's just too hard. One of the things we can take solace in is that we might be clearing the path for the next generation. Each time we brandish the sword of the Spirit (God's word *Eph. 6:17*) we can't help but mow down the cares of this world and make Satan's attempts futile. We help clear the path every time we attend services (*Heb. 10:24-25*), lend aide to others (*James 2:8*), crucify the old man of sin (*Rom. 6:6*), when we lift our prayers to the Father (*Mark 14:38*) and when we emulate the Lord (*Eph. 5:1*). Of course Jesus Christ is our ultimate motivation in regards to the ups and downs of this life (*Heb. 12:2*).

Also keep in mind our actions don't go unnoticed. We need to carefully walk the corridor of this life because we may not realize that little feet may be trying to follow the footprints we are making in front of them. Every now and then we need to look behind us and see who's tagging along.

*Deuteronomy 4:9 "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren.*

- Bruce J. Dehut

Oak Grove church of Christ  
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Louisville, KY 40291

### Oak Grove

### Church of Christ

(502) 749-9209

#### Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship: 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

#### Evangelist:

Bruce J. Dehut  
Home Bible Studies Available  
Upon Request

[oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org](http://oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org)

# You Are A Kxy Person!

By Richard Looney

Xvxn though my computxr is an old modxl, it works wxll xxcxpt for onx of thx kxys. I'vx wishxd many timxs that it workxd pxrfxctly. Trux, thxrx arx 42 kxys that function, but only onx kxy not working makxs thx diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs, it sxxms to mx that thx church is somxwhat likx my computxr — not all thx pxoplx arx working propxrlly. You might say, "wxll, I'm only onx pxrson. It won't makx much diffxrxncx."

But you sxx, a church, to bx xffixxnt, nxxds thx activx participation of vxxy pxrson. Thx nxxt timx you think your xfforts arxn't nxxdxd, rxmxxbxr my computxr, and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson and thx church nxxds mx vxry much."

*Eph. 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

# Nibbles and Sips

By Steven Harper

In the most well-known message of Jesus, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). In this passage, Jesus promises that those who are striving to attain to the righteousness of God and everything associated therewith will have their search fulfilled and their hunger satisfied. Great pleasure is afforded God when He sees us, the sinful creatures who walk His creation, seek for something greater than ourselves. He is more than willing to give us what we seek: righteousness.

Man has often sought to establish his own righteousness (just ask the apostle Paul, Rom. 10:1-3), but none have been successful in finding or coming

up with a righteousness which was able to make us right in the sight of God. Some have 'righteousness,' but it is woefully inadequate (Matt. 5:20). Men are no different today than those of Christ's time. They still seek to establish their own righteousness (situation ethics) and they still fail. The only righteousness that matters in the big picture of life and salvation — that which comes from God — can be found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16, 17), and we can wear that righteousness only in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21).

Knowing this, how hard are we striving to obtain this righteousness? Some believe it is not a matter of our striving for righteousness (they claim we are incapable of even making an effort) because it is all God's doing. To some, righteousness is simply transmitted by God to previously-chosen select individuals, with absolutely no regard to their hearts. But is that the picture we see in Matthew 5:6? Is not Jesus speaking to those who ARE striving to find and obtain that righteousness? I believe He is! The very words 'hungering and thirsting' imply an effort on the part of the individual! And for what are they hungering and thirsting? Righteousness!

If we want to obtain this righteousness (which is from God and not man), how hard are we trying? Are we really hungering and thirsting for it? I am firmly convinced that the majority of people on this earth are not hungering and thirsting for righteousness, but that there are quite a few who are completely satisfied to nibble and sip on it.

What do I mean by that? Simple. Whether because of this erroneous doctrine of Calvinism or simply because of a failure to understand the urgency in obeying the will of God, many plainly do not have the hunger or the thirst for the righteousness which comes from God. Many are content to nibble on a little bit of God's word here or there and sip on the juice of apathetic service while claiming to be servants of God who love Jesus. These individuals get just enough spirituality to deceive their souls into thinking they are filled and then they quit until the pangs of hunger and the dry, chapped soul begs for more. Then they again nibble and sip at the table of

righteousness which God has so abundantly provided. This manner of serving God is quite appalling. Because they believe their actions do not affect their soul's destination, they live in an un-Christian manner. They brush aside any criticisms by saying, "Once saved, always saved," and point back to their baptism which, they claim, is the "outward sign of inward grace."

The Calvinists are not alone. There are plenty of nibblers and sippers to be found. Unfortunately, many are alive and (not-so) well in the Lord's church! These individuals are those who find no point in coming to Bible class because they just can't see the need to put a whole additional hour's effort in better understanding God's word while in a Bible class setting. They are joined by those who actually show up for the Bible class but put no effort into studying ahead of time to be able to know what the teacher is saying. They nibble at the word and partake of just enough to speak up and reveal their ignorance, and they sip just frequently enough to be able to say the *right* phrases, like "sins rolled forward" and how they were raised "church of Christ." Like the other sippers and nibblers, they are deceiving only themselves as to how much actual nourishment they are ingesting and before too long they are nothing but spiritual skin and bones.

If we knew someone who was physically undernourished, we would make great effort in first getting them to see that they had a problem. Then, we would do our best to feed them ourselves until they overcame the failure to properly nourish themselves and started eating a sufficient amount of food to sustain them. Why do we not do the same for our brethren, spiritually-speaking?

Take a look around. Look at SELF first. What do you see? Are you actually hungering and thirsting for righteousness? What about your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you see people who are fighting to get to the front of the line to be served, or do you see people who sit back and say they are already filled? Are we hungry or are we nibbling?

What would the world say?

## THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST

### Sunday Morning Service

Announcements: **Arvil Young**

Song Leader: **Wayne Runner**

Opening Prayer: **J.O. Smith**

Lord's Table: **Kenny Case  
Greg Walker  
Brian Shepherd  
Randall Alford**

Scripture Reading: **David Shepherd**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Steve Smith**

### Sunday Evening Service

Announcements: **Arvil Young**

Song Leader: **Wayne Runner**

Opening Prayer: **Larry Runner**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Kenny Case**

Closing Prayer: **Chuck Sharp**